

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Making Our Campuses More Adult Learner Friendly

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Submitted By: Lisa Cox

6/1/2009

1. Analysis of Need/Problem Statement

Based on the institutional plan to become more adult learner friendly the following needs have been identified:

- Funding for scholarships targeted specifically for adult learners.
- Specific personnel identified to inform and serve adult learners.
- Intentional outreach and collaboration with community agencies and employers.
- Cohesive group of adult learner advocates who are committed to promoting the interests of adult learners, including financial aid, flexible academic programming, credit for prior learning, campus climate and strategic partnerships.
- A systematic approach to addressing adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment and provide resources to help those learners reach their goals.

2. Project Objectives

For the purposes of this project, the following objectives have been identified:

Objective 1: To identify and support at least one individual to serve as a point of contact for adult learners transitioning to campus.

Objective 2: To develop holistic approach to addressing adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment and provide career development resources to help those learners reach their goals.

Objective 3: To form an adult learner adult learner workgroup to investigate and make recommendations related to the areas financial assistance, credit for prior learning, flexible academic programming, campus climate and strategic partnerships.

Objective 4: To fund at least \$10,000 in scholarships for adult learners during the 2009-2010 academic year.

3. Description of Activities

The **point of contact for adult learners** transitioning to campus will meet a wide variety of needs identified in this proposal, as well as in the institutional plan. The creation of this position will be facilitated with the formation of the Student Outreach and Transitions Office (or a similar name). This office will serve as the centerpiece for support and services targeted to meet the unique and varying needs of adult learners.

More specifically, this office will serve as a one-stop shop for a variety of needs. Prospective students will be able to receive individualized consulting services in the areas of admissions, degree audits, major selection, academic bankruptcy, credit transfer process, degree completion via distance learning, and course registration prior to their first semester. The office will also strive to have answers to basic questions regarding filing for financial aid, financial aid appeals, professional judgment, securing veterans' benefits, receiving credit for prior learning and paying off outstanding balances with the institution. This area will provide comprehensive

support to students from initial inquiry on through to registration for their first semester of classes and serve as an advocate to promote their needs.

The Director of this office aided, by the support of carefully chosen graduate assistant, will provide the following services:

Area	Need	Services
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of special services to meet needs of the targeted populations An identified first point of contact about attending ECU Richmond campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with agencies within our service region that interface with the targeted populations Collaborate with extended campuses to identify students needing to take classes through the main campus Develop a strong web presence with comprehensive listing of services and resources
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application completion Admissions notification Visiting student at other institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide application completion assistance Monitor application status Trouble shoot and ID outstanding records required
Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credit transfer process Transfer credit audit Taking courses at other institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain transfer credit process and assist with needed paperwork Collaborate with Transfer Center to answer student's questions Identify equivalent courses through the KYVU which assist student in moving toward graduation Provide referrals to Transfer Center as appropriate
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing for financial aid Changes to family income Scholarship opportunities Veterans benefits WIA & Voc Rehab benefits Student Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide FAFSA link and explain process Provide info about professional judgment Promote the development of scholarships for targeted populations Collaborate with VA benefits specialist Form relationships to assist with receipt of WIA and Voc Rehab benefits Explain student employment process Provide referrals as appropriate
Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of Military Credit Records reactivation Change to original gen ed requirements Exceptions to University policy Academic Bankruptcy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide info about getting military credit evaluated Notify Records when student has been readmitted to get records reactivated Request for change to original gen ed requirements Explore opportunities for exceptions which facilitate degree completion as appropriate Assist with identification of semesters to be bankrupted and related paperwork

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to college advisor as appropriate
Career Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing major to match career goals • Graduate school consulting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of career goals • Enrollment in GCS 199 • Referrals to Career Services and online resources • Referrals to Graduate School and online resources
Counseling/ Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test/math anxiety • Stress • Work/family balance • Learning or physical disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of potential workshops • Connection to tutoring services • Facilitate peer support opportunities • Referrals and follow-up as appropriate
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT • CLEP & Departmental exams • GRE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized review of assessment needs related to testing • Referrals to testing center for services
Co-operative Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to receive course credit for employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of student interest in receiving Co-op credit • Referrals to Co-Op office for services
Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration/change of major • Identification of major advisor • Activation of ECU Direct and student email • Course selection, including selection of online course offerings • Registration process • Assistance with the course override process • Blackboard activation and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with ECU Direct activation process. • Troubleshoot and address CARES problems • Interpret CARES and assist with course selection • ID and refer to major advisor or academic specialist as needed • Monitor availability of online course offerings • Assist with course registration process • Maintain positive relationship with chair of the Gen Ed committee to facilitate overrides to the gen ed requirements • Collaborate with individual instructors or departmental chairs to obtain seats in online courses.

It is expected this approach will have a very positive impact allowing ECU to reach many of the objectives in this proposal. In order to successfully support this initiative funds will be used for travel for professional development, marketing, office supplies for direct student benefit and travel for outreach.

A holistic approach to addressing **adult learners' life and career goals** before or at the onset of enrollment and provide career development resources to help those learners reach their goals will be facilitated through the Student Outreach and Transitions Office in collaboration with Career Services. The offices will work together to review a variety of career development and career exploration instruments and resources. Funds from this proposal will be used to purchase these items for use with incoming or current adult students in need of this support. Since the approach is intended to be holistic it will be a multiphase process and include both individual and small group consulting. It is expected the small group experiences will also provide a venue for adult students to connect peers and form relationships on campus.

The **adult learner workgroup** will serve as campus-wide advocates for adult learner needs and concerns. It will be comprised of individuals from the areas of Academic, Student and Financial Affairs, as well as adult students interested in being a voice for their peers. The workgroup will meet monthly and develop a plan of action to carry out components of the institutional plan as appropriate. For example they will schedule and facilitate focus groups to explore the reasons behind the performance gap in how ECU view its financial aid for adult learners and the perceptions of the adult learners themselves. They will make policy recommendations related to the area of credit for prior learning and flexible academic programming as appropriate. The will

The **\$10,000 in scholarships for adult learners** will be financed through the funds received as a result of this proposal. The **adult learner workgroup** will be charged with conducting focus groups to identify the characteristics of adult learners interested in scholarships. The workgroup will then use this information to determine the award amount and criteria for these scholarships.

4. Evaluation Plan

Objective 1: To identify and support at least one individual to serve as a point of contact for adult learners transitioning to campus.

Evaluation: This objective will be met with the creation of the Student Outreach and Transitions Office (or similar name). Additional evaluation will include the number of students served, number enrolled and institutional credit hours for which they enroll for each semester.

Objective 2: To develop and provide a holistic approach to addressing at least 25 adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment and provide career development resources to help those learners reach their goals.

Evaluation: This objective will be evaluated for success by the identification of 25 adult students who will be taken through a career development process. The students' satisfaction with the process will be assessed and revisions to the process will be made based on their feedback.

Objective 3: To form an adult learner adult learner workgroup to investigate and make recommendations related to the areas financial assistance, credit for prior learning, flexible academic programming, campus climate and strategic partnerships.

Evaluation: This objective will be met with the formation of a workgroup comprised of individuals from Academic, Student and Financial Affairs. The workgroup will also include at least two adult learner student representatives. Success of the workgroup will be measured by the number of recommendations effectively implemented within the institution.

Objective 4: To fund at least \$10,000 in scholarships for adult learners during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Evaluation: This objective will be met with the awarding of at least \$10,000 in scholarships to adult learners (students 25 and older) during the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters.

5. Financial Information

Project or Activity	FY 09-10
Point of Contact	
• Time, Effort and Fringes	\$3,500.00
• Graduate Assistant	\$10,850.00
• Professional Development	\$3,000.00
• Marketing	\$1,300.00
• Office Supplies	\$300.00
• Travel for Outreach	\$300.00
Adult Learner's Life and Career Goals	
• Career Assessment Instruments (25 x \$30)	\$750.00
Scholarships	\$10,000.00
Total	\$30,000.00